

EXPRESS OPINION

Untouchable villains

THE Anglo-Spanish extradition treaty, now ready for signing, has a loophole big enough to push the Rock of Gibraltar through.

It will leave those British villains already ensconced in their villas serenely unruffled. They will still be able to thumb their noses at British justice, because the treaty will not be applied retroactively.

That is to say, it will only apply to those scuttling to Spain after it becomes law.

As we wanted the treaty specifically to flush out those already there—at least 100 at the last count—it seems hardly to have been worth drafting.

The Spanish explain that their legal system prohibits the retroactive application of new laws. So does ours, though not absolutely.

The principle of not penalising people for past actions later declared illegal is sound and fair.

But seriously, to suggest that this also prevents you from telling fugitives that they may no longer enjoy the sanctuary of your shores, is ridiculous.

We should continue to press for a proper and effective treaty.

BR must use strike ballot law

THERE should be no doubt about British Rail's response to the rail unions' threats to cause disruption next Thursday.

It should use the legal weapons that the Government has forged to deter such union irresponsibility, and compel the NUR and the train drivers' union, ASLEF, to hold a strike ballot.

Next week's action is being called in support of Arthur Scargill's futile and failing pit strike.

Its immediate objective is to force BR management to stop the movement of coal by train.

Its immediate sufferers, of course, will be the travelling public.

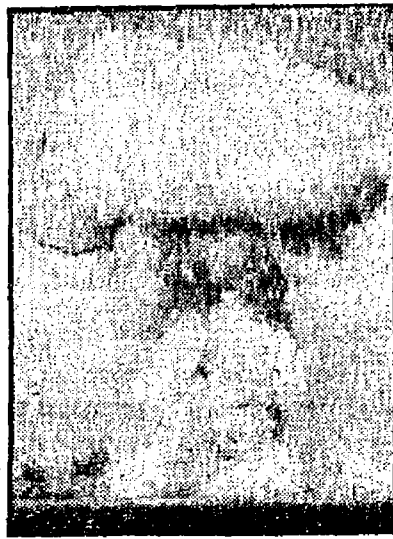
But the ultimate sufferers will be the railwaymen themselves. For every hour of disruption on the railways induces a few more of BR's valuable customers to take to the road, and to stay there.

Why Kennedy is getting the bird

THE hero of Chappaquiddick, Senator Edward Kennedy, has not been getting the rave reviews he expected on his South African "gig."

In fact, many of the blacks he has encountered have given him the bird. They can recognise a vote-grubbing phoney when they see one, and are in no mood to welcome yet another visiting "liberal" whose real audience is back home.

Given the senator's record as a "thinker" on important and complex issues, South Africa's blacks no doubt suspect his future comments about South Africa will be as facile and foolish as his comments on Northern Ireland.



By GEORGE GALE

THE United States and the Soviet Union have agreed that a whole new series of arms control talks should begin.

The potential importance of the talks just concluded in Geneva between U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko is at once obvious, and the temptation to sigh with relief very great.

The world is surely safer when its two super-powers are sitting at the negotiating table; and if an arms race is to be avoided and the horror of nuclear war to be averted, who can possibly object?

Alas, it is not as simple as that, as those who recall Hitler's negotiations with Chamberlain will realise—or those who remember how the Stalin-Von Ribbentrop non-aggression pact between Russia and Germany of 1939 was followed by Hitler's assault upon Russia.

Talks, negotiations and treaties between great powers do not necessarily ensure peace. Agreements on disarmament do not necessarily disarm both sides or avert war. Countries cheat and national interests, as perceived by national leaders, remain paramount and overwhelming, whatever be written on scraps of paper.

There is, however, something to be welcomed in the accord reached at Geneva between Shultz and Gromyko. In reaching that accord, both sides have taken account of some political and military realities.

FAILURE

President Reagan has recognised the political imperative that he be seen to negotiate.

The failure of the Soviet Union to prevent the deployment of Cruise missiles in Britain and Europe doubtless contributed towards nudging them to the table. But the military and economic imperative which has brought them there is clearly Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative, or Star Wars threat.

This greatly alarms the Soviets.

Were the United States to deploy a missile defence system in space, the Soviet Union would be compelled either to develop a system capable of outwitting it, or to devise a similar system—or both.

Either course would be hideously expensive, not only in money terms but also in technological skills.

The American economy and American technology are far better able to sustain an entirely new escalation in

defence expenditure and production than is the Soviet economy and Soviet technology.

Here is the nub. Star Wars threaten to bankrupt the Soviet Union. It may well be that Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative is designed primarily to make this threat. At all events, it has thoroughly alarmed the Soviet Union and imposed an imperative which has brought Gromyko to Geneva.

In agreeing to talks the Americans and the Russians have acted prudently, and it is very desirable that they should do so.

But can such talks succeed? The proposal is for the Americans and the Russians to have single negotiating teams embarking on three sets of negotiations:—

These are on strategic inter-continental weapons; on intermediate short-range weapons; and on weapons in space. The complexities of such negotiations are enormous.

Gromyko has described the agreement to talk as "but a step compared to the immense tasks which are to be addressed in the course of the negotiations." George Shultz, flying back to the States yesterday, said: "Nobody's hat should go in the air."

It is extremely difficult to see how such talks could be satisfactorily concluded in a way benefiting the security of both sides. And even were this possible, it would be virtually impossible for such agreements to benefit the security



Talks about talks: Shultz (left) with Gromyko

ALWAYS ON PAGE 8—THE BIG ISSUE

Chilling reality of this nuclear thaw

of continental Europe and ourselves.

An agreement satisfactory to the Soviet Union could scarcely be satisfactory to the United States, unless the Soviet Union were to abandon its ambition to lead the world into a new international order based upon Communism. The Soviet Union shows no intention of doing this.

Likewise, an agreement satisfactory to the Soviet Union would require the United States to do four things: To withdraw into an isolationist posture. To cease resisting Soviet expansionism in the third world. To cease encouraging dissidence and disaffection in Eastern Europe. And to cease regarding its eastern frontier as that of West Germany.

The United States shows no intention of so doing.

The interests of the Soviet Union and of the United States are opposed, and no amount of arms control will change this. What arms control could, however, do is to change the balance of power between East and West. And the fear must be that it is most likely to do so to the advantage of the East.

DANGER

The danger of the talks eventually succeeding—or appearing to succeed—could therefore be far greater than the danger of failure.

The total elimination of nuclear arms has long been an objective of Soviet policy, for the very obvious reason that, without nuclear arms, Soviet conventional strength would allow the Kremlin to dominate all Europe.

The elimination of nuclear arms would destroy the nuclear statecraft. It would make conventional war possible again.

It is easy to see how such a policy makes sense to the Russians. It is not at all easy to see what sense it makes to the Americans, unless they plan to retreat into isolationism.

It makes no sense at all to western Europe and to Britain—unless we are prepared to bring back conscription and massive peacetime armies and to ready ourselves for almost certain war.

SCARGILL—BEATEN BY THE STARS



Arthur Scargill:
So single-minded

DON'T hold your breath, but the miners' strike is coming to an end.

Arthur Scargill—47 tomorrow—may not know it yet, but his stars predict that the dispute will draw to its inevitable conclusion—around the end of August.

His chart is strong and resourceful, and it is obvious where the miners' leader gets his stamina and single-mindedness.

His sun in Capricorn gives him determination and ambition; Venus conjuncting the

Sun suggests charisma; the moon in Taurus makes him an excellent organiser.

Like many Capricorns, Mr Scargill's main problem is one of timing. After a confidence-boosting 1984, they are reluctant to accept second best in 1985.

That is how the planetary transits look for Mr Scargill. But, of course, there are 180,000 miners whose stars could turn everything upside down.

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